



United States Attorney's Office
District of Columbia

Channing D. Phillips
Acting United States Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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Former accountant pleads guilty to defrauding two nonprofits

--Defendant embezzled more than \$500,00--

WASHINGTON - Charles Joseph Clifton, a former accountant, pleaded guilty today to wire fraud and first degree theft in a scheme through which he embezzled more than half a million dollars from two Washington, D.C. nonprofit agencies where he had been employed, Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips and Postmaster General Gregory Campbell jointly announced today.

Clifton, 34, formerly of Washington, D.C., pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia before the Honorable Reggie Walton. The maximum sentence for wire fraud is 20 years of imprisonment, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gain. The maximum sentence for first degree theft is ten years of imprisonment, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$5,000. Under the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Clifton faces a likely prison sentence of between 33 and 41 months. Sentencing is scheduled for September 15, 2009.

According to the facts presented today in court, from 2004 to 2008, Clifton was the controller for the American Society for International Law, a nonprofit educational membership organization located in the District of Columbia. Clifton used his special access to the Society's banking accounts to embezzle \$425,558.33, including \$48,758.33 he wired from the Society's account to an automobile dealer in Fairfax, Virginia; with those Society funds, Clifton purchased for himself a new 2006 BMW 325I. From 1998 to 2004, Clifton worked as an accountant for the American Bakers Association, a nonprofit trade association headquartered in the District of Columbia. Clifton used his special access to the Association's bank accounts to embezzle \$145,432.26, including \$37,843.26 in Association funds that he used to purchase for himself a new 2004 Audi A4 automobile.

In announcing the guilty plea, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips and Postmaster General Campbell commended Postal Inspectors Delano Watkins and Jan Kostka. They also commended Criminal Investigator Diane Eickman, Paralegal Specialist Diane Hayes, and Legal Assistant Jamasee Lucas. Finally, they commended Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy G. Lynch, who is prosecuting the case.

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